



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

OCT 5 2010

Ms. Mary Jean Yon, Director
Division of Waste Management
Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)
Twin Towers Building
2600 Blair Stone Road
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2400

Dear Ms. Yon:

At your request, the Superfund Division of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 has reviewed the methodology and conclusions presented in FDEP's investigation report on The Acreage. Specifically we reviewed the following documentation:

The Acreage Drinking Water and Soil Sampling (February, March and April 2010), Loxahatchee, Palm Beach County, Florida – Sampling Information for Soil (SIS) Report, #2010-04 which can be found on the FDEP Southeast District Office "Acreage" web page at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/southeast/acreage/default.htm> near the bottom of the page, under the general heading: Reports and SIS and Water for The Acreage Community, Palm Beach County (February, March and April 2010).

The FDEP's investigation was comprehensive in its analytical testing and included sufficient number of ground water samples to screen this large area for drinking water contamination and sufficient number of soil samples to support the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) evaluation of health concerns. We agree with FDEP's conclusion that the data show no indication of widespread ground water or soil contamination; nor any evidence suggesting the existence of any significant localized source(s) of contamination. The radiological data provided in this report show no results that would warrant further investigation, or would cause any elevated risk to the public. All results from the gamma spectroscopy analysis are comparable to natural background levels that are typical for these radionuclides in Florida soils and ground water.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the details of your investigation and conclusions associated with The Acreage and we hope that our review and comments are helpful to FDEP,

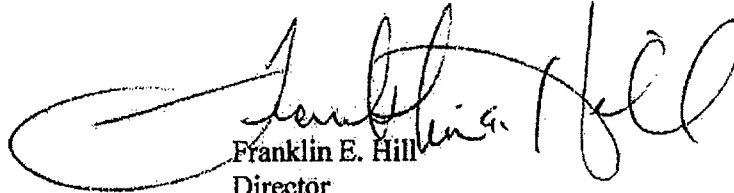
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DIVISION OF
WASTE MANAGEMENT

FDOH, and the community. Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (404) 562-8599 or have your staff contact Glenn Adams of our Technical Services Section at (404) 562-8771.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Franklin E. Hill", is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Franklin E. Hill
Director
Superfund Division

cc: Mr. Doug Jones, FDEP



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MAR - 9 2010

The Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-0905

Dear Senator Nelson:

Thank you for your February 5, 2010, letter to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa P. Jackson regarding an investigation into the cause of the cancer cluster in Palm Beach County. Your letter references the increased level of cancer of the brain and central nervous system in children and young women in the Acreage and requests that EPA help state and local officials conduct further environmental testing and study of this area. You further mention that state health officials need guidance from federal agencies. Your inquiry has been referred to my office for a response.

Coordinated sampling efforts are underway by state and local authorities and EPA has offered to assist in those efforts. Region 4's Superfund Division Director and his staff have been in close communication with Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) officials since last summer when the issue was identified to both agencies. We offered our assistance to FDEP at that time and have continued to do so. FDEP is providing support to the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) to determine whether there are any apparent environmental links to the Acreage cancer cluster. Last month, FDEP collected additional drinking water samples from private wells in the Acreage. Homes were sampled in pairs to include one home with reported cancer and a similarly situated nearby home with no reported case of cancer. The samples are being analyzed for over 200 individual chemicals. Results are expected to be available mid March. FDEP also plans to conduct soil sampling in the Acreage in early March, as most homes in this area are built on fill, which is reported to be recovered screened construction and debris material from landfills and hurricane debris.

FDOH and the Palm Beach County Health Department (PBCHD) recently conducted radon tests in eleven homes related to reports of pediatric brain cancer. The results were below the action level of four pica curies per liter. FDOH is also testing for gamma radiation in areas both inside and outside of these eleven homes and twelve other control homes. Results are forthcoming and will be provided to the homeowners. In addition, four concerned residents have requested gamma testing and their results were not above the background level.

The Center for Disease Control's National Center for Environmental Health is working with FDOH and PBCHD on analyzing data collected in The Acreage. We have had regular discussions with our Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Senior Regional Representative about finding the cause of the cancer cluster in The Acreage and possible opportunities for collaborative efforts. To the extent that EPA becomes involved in the investigation, we would work with ATSDR to analyze the data to determine if the levels of contaminants in the environment could pose a health threat to the community.

EPA has been involved with evaluating the area to determine if any old facilities, spills, or other releases of hazardous materials occurred in the vicinity. To date, EPA and FDEP have not found contaminated sites that could be identified as sources or causes. The purpose of FDEP's drinking water sampling event conducted last August was to investigate the possibility of industrial or agricultural hazards in the community which might affect the drinking water supply. The results show no indication of such hazards. Another FDEP sampling event confirmed that groundwater contaminated with 1,4-dioxane from the Pratt & Whitney site has not impacted the private wells. Out of the 50 private wells sampled, only two wells contained trace levels of 1,4-dioxane, well below the applicable Florida Groundwater Cleanup Target Level. The remaining 48 private wells were determined to be free of 1,4-dioxane.

We appreciate this opportunity to keep you informed of our involvement in the investigation of The Acreage cancer cluster. As I have explained, EPA does not have an active role in the investigation at this time, but we continue to communicate regularly with our partners at FDEP and the health agencies.

If you have questions or need additional information from EPA, please contact me or the Region 4 Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at (404) 562-8327.

Sincerely,



A. Stanley Meiburg
Acting Regional Administrator

cc: Dr. Michael McGeehin, CDC
Michael Sole, Secretary FDEP
Ana M. Viamonte Ros, Surgeon General FDOH